

**REMARKS**

Entry of the claim amendments and favorable reconsideration of this application in light of these amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 25 having been canceled and claim 41 having been added, the Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-24 and 26-41 remain pending and properly under consideration in this application. The Applicants contend that support for claim 41 may be found in at least original claims 1 and 2.

The Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's indication that the drawings have been accepted by the Examiner. Action Summary at 10.

**Interview Summary**

The Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's participation in a telephonic interview with Applicants' representative on August 10, 2006, during which the content of the Advisory Action dated August 3, 2006, was discussed, particularly with respect to claim 41. The Applicants' representative requested a Supplemental Advisory Action, which the Examiner subsequently provided on August 21, 2006, that addressed the allowability of new claim 41 as provided for in paragraph 6. of the Advisory Action form.

**Specification**

Although the Applicants appreciate the Examiner's suggestion with regard to the statement regarding the incorporation by reference of the priority documents, Action at 2, the Applicants respectfully prefer to retain an explicit incorporation of these references in the Specification text. As indicated above, however, the Applicants have slightly amended the corresponding section of the specification to clarify the relationship between these applications and reduce the likelihood of confusion in this regard.

**Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103**

Claims 1, 23, 24, 26-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ballantine et al.'s U.S. Patent No. 6,339,018 ("Ballantine") in view of Wolf et al.'s treatise *Silicon Processing for the VLSI Era*, Vol. 1 ("Wolf"). Action at 3. The Applicants traverse this rejection with respect to the remaining claims for the reasons detailed below.

The Applicants submit that the cancellation of claim 1 renders the rejection of that claim moot. The Applicants further note that, as reflected in the amendments above, claim 23 has been rewritten to incorporate the additional limitations previously recited in claim 25. In light of the previously indicated allowability of claim 25, the Applicants submit that claim 23, and the claims that depend therefrom, are now allowable over the applied references.

The Applicants, therefore, request that this rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn accordingly.

Claims 30 and 31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ballantine in view of Wolf and further in view of Ku et al.'s U.S. Patent No. 6,329,276 ("Ku"). Action at 6.

The Applicants contend that claims 30 and 31 are allowable for the reasons detailed above as a consequence of their dependence from claim 23.

The Applicants, therefore, request that this rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn accordingly.

Claims 32-35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Ballantine in view of Wolf, and further in view of Cabral, Jr. et al.'s U.S. Publication No. 2004/0123922 ("Cabral").

The Applicants contend that claims 32-35 are allowable for the reasons detailed above as a consequence of their dependence from claim 23.

The Applicants, therefore, request that this rejection be reconsidered and withdrawn accordingly.

**Allowable Subject Matter**

The Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's indication that claims 12-22 are allowed, that previously submitted (but not yet entered) claim 41 is allowable (Supplemental Action at paragraph 6.) and that claims 2-11, 25 and 36-40 are objected to as depending from a rejected base claim, specifically claim 1, and would, therefore, be allowable if rewritten in independent form incorporating limitations of all included claims. In light of the amendments to the claims reflected above by which claims 1 and 25 are canceled, the Applicants contend that all remaining rejected claims have been canceled and, accordingly, that the application is now in condition for allowance.

**Authorization for Examiner's Amendments**

Although the Applicants submit that the claim amendments presented above are in accord with the agreement reached during the August 10, 2006, interview, and that the application is, therefore, in condition for allowance, the Applicants hereby authorize the Examiner to make such other amendments as necessary to place the application in condition for allowance, particularly with regard to newly identified formal matters.

**CONCLUSION**

In view of the above remarks and amendments, the Applicants respectfully submit that each of the pending objections and rejections have been addressed and overcome, leaving the present application in condition for allowance. A notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge any underpayment or non-payment of any fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17, or credit any overpayment of such fees, to Deposit Account No. 08-0750, including, in particular, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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